



St. Paul's
Evangelical Lutheran
Church

127 Cherry Rd. NE, Massillon, OH 44646

330 832-7409

January 2026
Newsletter

The Bridge

Connecting Church with Home

Contact Us: [Click to send an email](#)

[Rev. Mark Kreemer, Senior Pastor](#)•[Kathryn Myers, Church Council President](#)•[Dr. Abigail Haake, Director of Music](#)•[Dr. Carol Butler, Newsletter Editor](#)•[Tracie Schmolt, Finance Administrator](#)•[Jackie Pritchett, Office Volunteer](#)

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New Beginnings, Faithful God



Dear Friends in Christ,

January always feels like a threshold. We stand with one foot in what has been and the other in what is yet to come. The calendar turns, the decorations come down, and we are invited—whether we want to be or not—to reflect on time, change, and hope.

Scripture reminds us that while the year may be new, **God is not**. The prophet Isaiah proclaims, *“Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”* (Isaiah 43:18–19). This promise is not about erasing the past, but about trusting that God is still at work—still creating, still redeeming, still calling us forward.

January can be a complicated month. For some, it arrives with excitement and anticipation. For others, it comes quietly, carrying grief, uncertainty, or fatigue. The good news of the Gospel is that God meets us in **all** of it. We do not have to have everything figured out for the year ahead. We are simply invited to walk in faith, one day at a time, trusting that Christ goes before us.

As a congregation, we begin this year grounded in grace. We gather around Word and Sacrament, we care for one another, we welcome the stranger, and we serve our neighbors. These practices do not depend on the calendar—they are the steady rhythms of a people shaped by God’s love.

As we move into this new year, my prayer for you is simple:
that you would know God’s presence in ordinary days,
that you would find strength for what lies ahead,

and that you would trust that nothing—neither past nor future—can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Peace and blessings for the New Year,
Pastor Mark

Upcoming Events

The [church calendar](#) is always available on every page of the church [website](#) on the right side, along with the church address, phone number, email address, and Youtube link for the online services. The online calendar contains the most up-to-date listing of events.

[Click to see Church Calendar](#)

Weekly events

Sunday: **Worship** 10:00 am

Sunday School after church service, 11:30 am

Wednesday Snip-N-Stitch, 9:00 am

Thursday Bible Studies, 10:00 am

Thursday Chair Yoga following Bible Study, 11:00 am

Monthly events

Tuesday, January 6, 6:30 p: **Worship and Music Committee (1st Tuesday of month)**

Thursday, January 8, 6 pm: **Friendship Circle. (1st Thursday of month)**

Tuesday, January 13, 7 pm: **Church Council (2nd Tuesday of month)**

Friday, January 16, 4:30-6:00 pm: **Community Meal and Clothes Closet
(2nd Friday of month)**

Tuesday, January 20, 6 pm: **Finance Committee (3rd Tuesday of month)**

Special Events

Monday, January 5, 12-6 pm: **Blood Drive**

**BLOOD
DRIVES @
ST. PAUL'S**

2026

**1 PINT
SAVES
3 LIVES**

Mon, Jan 5, 2026	12 – 6:00 pm
Mon, Mar 2, 2026	12 – 6:00 pm
Mon, May 4, 2026	12 - 6:00 pm
Mon, Aug 24, 2026	12 - 6:00 pm

Lightstock

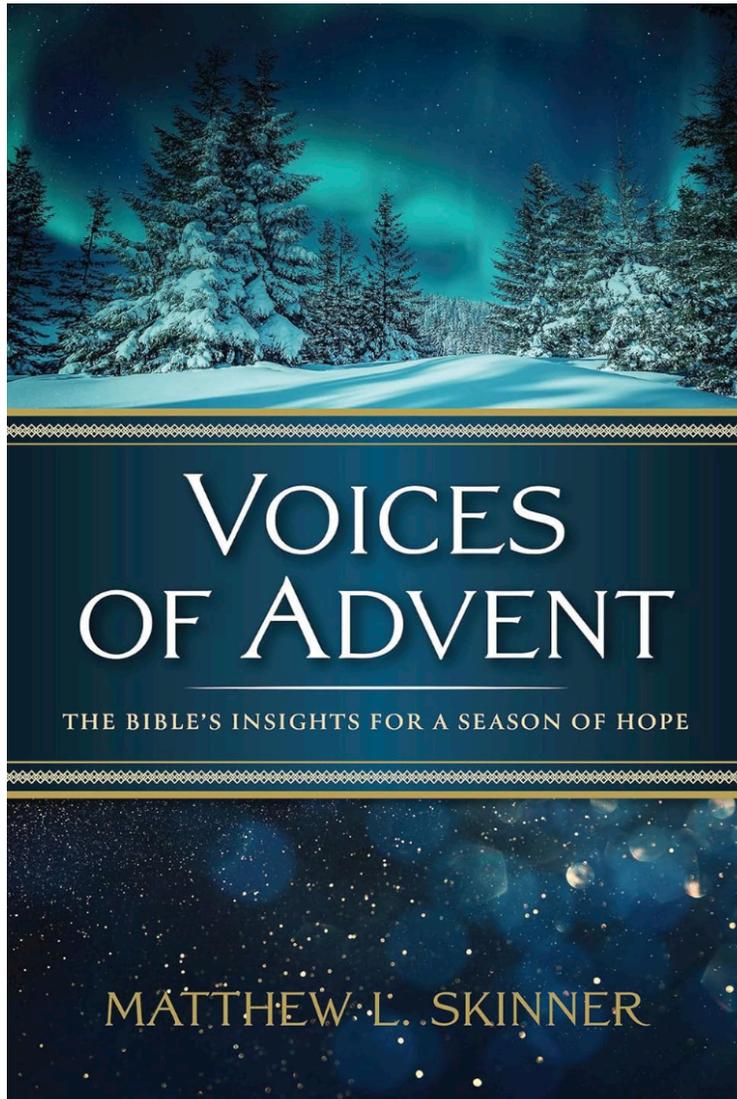
Adult Sunday School Class

After Sunday Worship: 11:30 am, second floor of Parish Hall

More Like Jesus

To be more like Jesus should be the aim of every believer. Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are fruit of the Spirit that make it possible for us to be “conformed to the image of his Son.” (Romans 8:29) Please join us as we study together and encourage one another to become more like Christ. We meet each Sunday at 11:30 on the top floor of Parish Hall. An elevator is available for easy access.

Thursday Morning Bible Study



Thursdays at 10:00 am in Parish Hall

In *Voices of Advent*, Matthew L. Skinner leads readers through biblical texts and explores how they shape our lives and Christmas celebrations. We listen as Jesus promises to return to us in the future, to John the Baptist as he prepares the way for the Messiah, to the faithful people and poets who anticipate the magnificence of Jesus's birth, and to the angels and visionaries who praise God when Christmas dawns. Listen carefully to the Bible's various perspectives that shape our preparations for Christmas; you'll hear hope in all of them. *Voices of Advent* helps readers experience Advent not only as the start of the Christian Church Year, but also as the powerful overture that sets the tone for the incredible story of Jesus.

Bible Studies at Tremont Coffee

Monday evening/Wednesday Morning Bible Studies at Tremont Coffee

Worth the Risk Bible Study

This Epiphany, we're exploring what it means to live as *Invitational Christians*. Through a Bible study led by Pastor Tina Crog of St. Jacob and Pastor Ash Welch of Christ Lutheran, we'll reflect on how God calls us to follow Jesus with courage, honesty, and love—and how we might invite others into faith without pressure or fear.

Grounded in the weekly Scripture readings and insights from *The Invitational Christian* by Dave Daubert, this series focuses on spiritual growth, authentic relationships, and noticing where God is already at work in our lives.

Bible study begins January 12, meeting Mondays at 6:00 pm and Wednesdays at 10:00 am at Tremont Coffee on Erie Street. Whether you've been part of the church for years or are simply curious, you are welcome to come, listen, and see what God is doing among us.

Church Council Highlights

Report from December 9

- Massillon clergy are already planning the community Lenten services and we will host the first one on February 25. The offerings will go to Faith in Action, and the theme of the services will be Objects of the Passion.
 - Pastor Mark will take a few days of vacation after Christmas but will not include any Sundays.
 - Dan Farrar informed us that St. Paul received a \$1500 grant from the Rodney Klein Stock Market Museum.
 - Property reported that the new fridge in the sacristy now has a new outlet, which is very welcome.
 - The boiler installation is complete.
 - Until we can hire a new custodian, we may ask members to do some light cleaning on occasion. Pastor Mark will also make an appeal to the congregation as a whole for help for a few weeks.
-

Respectfully shared,

Kathryn Myers
President, Church Council

Join the Fellowship Committee in these events!

Game Night – Sunday, January 18

Join us in the lounge at 5:00 pm to play games. We will play bingo with prizes, or you can bring a favorite board game or card game. Also bring an appetizer to share. This will be a fun chance to mix with our church family! Come and have fun!! **Sign up in the lounge** so we can make plans for how many will be coming.

Valentine Dinner and Dance – Saturday, February 7

Mark your calendar for this fun event with our own DJ, Chuck Richards. We will gather for dinner at 5:00 pm, followed by music with Chuck. Watch for details of our menu and cost.

Shrove Pancake Dinner – Tuesday, February 17

Come for our annual Pancake Dinner starting at 5:00 pm. Enjoy a pancake bar with special toppings, sausage, applesauce, and drinks. Join in a Mardi Gras craft. This is our feast before we begin the Lenten season.

December Community Meal Report



December's Community Meal proved to be a heartwarming event for everyone--we served 91 people!

For dinner we had ham, sweet potatoes, broccoli casserole, and pineapple. Music was playing while people enjoyed games! Goodies and small prizes were given to all who walked through the doors.

We also gave out bags of household items and bags full of food to help those in need, just as Jesus taught us to do.

A big thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who help to make this event possible, and a big shout out to St. Joseph's Catholic Church for sharing their abundance of broccoli with us to provide food for our guests. Heidi Hall gets the credit for hooking us up with them, as she volunteers there too! Thanks, Heidi!

Blessings and Peace,
Kim Oberlin

phone link: [Kim Oberlin](tel:)

email link: [Kim Oberlin](mailto:)



Clothes Closet Report

What a wonderful time of the year. We went all out for our community this Christmas. We gathered many decorations and holiday wear as well as 3 trees for our patrons available in the closet. Thank you for your many thoughtful donations.

Tracie placed our purchased toiletries into 120 decorative bags with ribbon ties. We set one at each placemat as favors. Volunteers also received favors.

Cindy placed stickers and a holiday poem on each placemat. She made certain each attendee had a special time including Christmas music.

Donated decorations were placed on the tables for the attendees to take home. Carol made gift bags for the children containing books, Christmas story coloring books, card games, spinners, other miscellaneous items including treats. The children were very happy to receive these.

Samantha, our volunteer, ran the games and thanked us for having so much fun. We provided 2 tables of mostly new items for prizes. Games and prizes were very popular.

We continue to be in need of boy's and men's jeans, casual pants and shirts, shoes, boots, and coats. Always appreciated household items, blankets, bedding, toys, and good clean used clothing items.

For additional info, contact Cindy Lash, Tracie Schmolt, or Carol Stoner.

Thanking you,

Cindy Lash, Tracie Schmolt, and Carol Stoner

Non-perishables Drive a Success



The Welfare and Social Committee is grateful for all the church members who donated nonperishable food and miscellaneous items for our Community Meal families for Christmas. These items were distributed on Friday, December 12. There were enough items for 104 bags!



Friendship Circle



December 18th was the Friendship Circle's Christmas party. Our hostesses were Sue Ambrosic and Becky Johnson. We had a wonderful meal, and then Barb Palmer led us in a fun-filled game of Family Feud. Although the team "The Grinches" lost, there might have been some challenges on scoring.

A gift exchange followed, and there may have been some shenanigans and tom foolery with the gifts. There was a lot of laughter and slight-of-hand with the final gift destination.

Remember all are welcome to Join Friendship Circle. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at 6 pm (April-December).

View more photos on our [church Facebook page](#).

God's Kitchen Angels



The Kitchen Angels met for a well-deserved celebration after a full fall and winter production schedule of pepperoni rolls, pumpkin rolls, and Christmas cookies.

In their latest project, which many of you are still enjoying, they made 295 dozen cut-out cookies, earning a profit of \$2,790. Most of that money was used to purchase the new furniture in the church side entrance. See photos below.



Comfortable seating on the landing.



A perfectly-sized table in the entryway.

Firestone Madrigal Singers

Our Advent season got off to a beautiful start with the Firestone CLC Madrigal Singers at Sunday service on November 30. They returned in the afternoon to regale us in a Madrigal Feast.

Much gratitude to Kim Oberlin for her contributions to making the meal a success.





Community Candlelight Walk

St. Paul's provided a wide variety of music for the December 7 Candlelight Walk. Vocalists and instrumentalists rehearsed for weeks ahead of time to present their musical offerings.

Instead of photos of the individuals in this newsletter, here is a [link to the Facebook post](#) featuring all the participants.

Alternatively, you may view the 2025 Advent Movie to catch glimpses of those who performed this year: 14 individuals in addition to the choir and bells.

Advent 2025

Note from Director of Music and Organist Abigail Haake:

Many thanks to Dwight and Carol Butler, Eleanor Manes, Sammy Kay Smith, Emily Roh, and her voice studio, the handbell choir, the Chancel Choir, Heidi Hall, Richard Evert, Jessica Gray, Sydney Johnson, Anderson Rambler, Thomas Haake, the Madrigal Singers from Firestone CLC, and the Camarada Brass Quintet for sharing their musical gifts in worship and during the Candlelight Walk this advent season. We are so fortunate to have so many musicians inside and outside of the congregation who so generously enrich our services with the gift of music.

Christmas Caroling

St. Paul's members spread Christmas cheer to those who are unable to attend in person. They had a good time singing carols and enjoying a delicious meal at the end.

Report from Sue Reid:

Thank you to our carolers who brought joy and love through song to our homebound members and friends on **December 6**. We sang Christmas carols to 10 of our members at home and several care facilities. When visiting the care facilities, many of the residents were able to join in on the carols with us and our homebound members. After caroling we returned to the church for a chicken dinner and shared stories about visits to these special members. It was so good to share the Christmas season through song and fellowship. A special thanks to Sue Ambrosic for setting up the visits. Sue works tirelessly to make sure we keep in touch with our homebound members.



Bonnie Dourm with Cindy Lash.



Amy White with Kathryn Myers, Sue Ambrosic, Sue Reid.

Christmas Eve 2025

We hope everyone had a Merry Christmas! Below are a few scenes from the Christmas services on Wednesday evening.



The candlelight tradition during "Silent Night" conveyed the holiness of the evening.



Thomas Haake performed a medley of traditional carols during the early service.



The Chancel Choir sang "Night of Silence" and "There is Faint Music" at the later service.



Camarada Brass Quintet provided beautiful anthems and accompaniments for the 10:30 service. They also performed a half hour of music prior to the service as people gathered.

Cathedral Concert Series to Feature Baritone Dr. Emery Stephens



Sunday, February 22, 4:00 PM

**Dr. Emery Stephens, Jr., baritone, Associate Professor of Voice,
Studies. Olaf College**

with

**Dr. Thomas Bandy, collaborative piano, Associate Professor of Vocal
Accompanying, Oberlin College**

and

Trevor Kazarian, cello

Presenting music of Harry T. Burleigh, H. Leslie Adams, Hall Johnson,
Kurt Weill, Florence B. Price, Leonard Bernstein, Dorothy Rudd Moore,
G. F. Handel, and Rosephanye Powell.

The Boston Phoenix praised baritone Emery Stephens for singing "with ringing suavity and articulate intelligence." His performances include collaborations with the Boston Art Song

Society, Bridge Chamber Music Festival, Handel & Haydn Society, Abridged Opera of Ontario, Wilmington Symphony, Arbor Opera Theater, Michigan Philharmonic, Ann Arbor Symphony, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera New England, and the Detroit Jazz Festival. Notably, he participated in a revival of Dave Brubeck's *The Gates of Justice*, sponsored by the Detroit Jazz Festival, alongside jazz pianist Jason Moran and his trio, *The Bandwagon*.

His research on Black composers' works and their place in the classical canon for voice teachers and students appears in the *Journal of Singing*, *Music Teachers National Association Journal*, the *Scholarship of Multicultural Teaching and Learning*, and as a contributing author of *So You Want to Sing Spirituals* by Randye Jones, and a book *Singing Down the Barriers: A Guide to Centering African American Song for Concert Performers* with co-author Caroline Helton. He also served as a lecturer, vocal coach, and recital curator for the MN Duo Program in 2025.

Dr. Stephens grew up in Boston, holds a B.A. from Gordon College, an M.M. from Boston University, and a D.M.A. from the University of Michigan. He studied vocal techniques with Lisa Popeil and taught at universities in North Carolina, Michigan, and Arkansas. He is a member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and the College Music Society.

CONCERTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL. YOUR FREEWILL OFFERING IS GRACIOUSLY RECEIVED.



Steel Drum Band Forming



Ellie's artistry was evident during the Candlelight Walk.

Coming in 2026! The St. Paul's Steelband! Through a generous donation of five instruments, Eleanor Manes will be starting a steelband for the congregation and greater Massillon community. No musical background necessary and any and all ages/skills are welcome. For more information, please contact Ellie: 330-400-8543.

Prayer List Update

Cole, Marty, Curt & Paul Staver, Jessie & Linda Shaffer, Nancy Lint, Steve Kress, Lenny Herd, Pastor Groenke, Eric Gerber, Judy Hall, Bonnie & Dave Dourm, Tom Fry, Carol Sargent, Kenneth & Jean Dexter, Anna Langenfeld, Arthur Barrett, Karen & Paul Daily, and Joan Spencer.

January Birthdays

Favorite hymns and verses:

Sue Reid, January 5: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." (Philippians 4:8)

Chris Hall, January 16: "Down To The River To Pray"

"As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the robe and crown?
Good Lord, show me the way."

Dwight Butler, January 22: "For the Lord God omnipotent Reigneth! Hallelujah!" ("Hallejuah Chorus" from *The Messiah*).

Kathryn Myers, January 24: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

Heidi Hall, January 27: *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.* (Proverbs 31:30)

Jan 1--Sue Ambrosic
Jan 2--Christopher Lash
Jan 2--Elizabeth
Inkinen- Schehl
Jan 5--Susan Reid
Jan 14--Matthew Skelly
Jan 15--Linda Mutchler
Jan 16--Robert (Chris) Hall

Jan 16--Catarina Monastra
Jan 17--Richard Cordes
Jan 18--Adam Johnson
Jan 19--Vera Gerber
Jan 19--Jessica Reiman
Jan 20--Karen Daily
Jan 21--Philip Halco
Jan 22 --Benjamin Myers

Jan 22--Dwight Butler
Jan 24--John Stanko
Jan 24--Kathryn Myers
Jan 27--Gregory Klein
Jan 27--Heidi Hall
Jan 29--Jack Fortune
Jan 31--Lauren Karch

Has your birthday or anniversary been missing from the published lists? If so, please contact the office so we can add it to our database. Thank you!

January Wedding Anniversary

Congratulations to the Halcos, our only January wedding couple!

Jan 12-- Philip & Gwen Halco

Thank You Note

Amelia Deerwester



Dear St. Paul's Lutheran church,

Thank you so much for the generous scholarship, + helping me to fund my Master's degree at Butler University. In May 2026, I will graduate and take my boards to become a certified Physician Assistant (PA) + pursue my dream of becoming a healthcare provider. I am so thankful for growing up in this congregation that has been so supportive of my growth spiritually + professionally. This month (Nov), I am traveling to a rural community in Belize to serve / provide healthcare to individuals there. Wish me luck! Best, Amelia Deemester

Flowers for the Altar for 2026

Please text Sue Ambrosic at 330-844-7648 if you would like to have the Altar or Throne flowers for 2026. **Carol Stoner will be taking charge of the flower orders in February.**

The cost of Altar flowers is \$40 per Sunday; the Throne flowers are \$28. Please contact Patty Carmola if you have any questions at 330-832-9405. You will be billed directly by *Carmola's Flowers* in Massillon.

Council Members

[Kathryn Myers](#), president
[Greg Klein](#), vice-president

Dwight Butler
Gary Collard

Dennis Morgan
Barb Palmer

Dan Farrar, treasurer
Jackie Pritchett, secretary

Shane Jackson
Jim Johnson
Lynda Klein

Sue Reid
Brady Rupp

Committee Members

EVANGELISM

Kathryn Myers, Chair

Amy Burkett,
Sue Ambrosic
Gayle Jackson
Becky Johnson
Cindy Lash
Deidra Monastra

FINANCE

Dan Farrar, Chair

Shane Jackson
Greg Klein
John Liebermann
Patty Long
Brady Rupp
Tracie Schmolt
John Stanko

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Greg Klein, Chair

Carol Butler
Dwight Butler
Abigail Haake
Karl Kalk
Patty Long
Kathryn Myers
Kim Oberlin

STAFF SUPPORT

Greg Klein, Chair

Jennifer Nelson Maurer
Jackie Pritchett
Elizabeth Schehl

WELFARE AND SOCIAL ACTION

Barb Palmer, Chair

Christine Bates
Judy Fichter
Lynda Klein
Deidra Monastra
Kathryn Myers
Kim Oberlin
JuDee Reed
David Stoner
LaShell Williamson

PARISH FELLOWSHIP

Sue Reid, Chair

Sue Ambrosic
Gary Collard
Becky Johnson
Loren Veigel

MISSION ENDOWMENT

Craig Maurer, Chair

Sue Ambrosic
Karl Kalk
Lynda Klein
Phyllis Staver

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Jim Johnson, Chair

Joe Hepler
John Liebermann
Dennis Morgan, Liaison
for Chair
Paul Mutchler
John Stanko

SCHOLARSHIP

Lynda Klein, Chair

Amy Burkett
John Liebermann
Lisa Skelly

YOUTH AND PARISH EDUCATION

Jackie Pritchett, Chair

Scott Larson
Deidra Monastra
Sue Reid

Serving During the Month of January

If you are interested in serving for a future month, click on the contact person's email link.

ASSISTING MINISTER

Contact [Karl Kalk](#)

1/4--Patty Long
1/11--Dave Stoner
1/18--Veronica Kreemer
1/25--Sue Reid

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

Contact [Kathryn Myers](#)

1/4--Shane Jackson & Barb Palmer
1/11--Lynda Klein & Greg Klein
1/18--Dennis Morgan & Kathryn Myers
1/25--Brady Rupp & Sue Reid

GREETERS

Contact [Karl Kalk](#)

1/4--Judy Fichter
1/11--Brady & Morgan Rupp
1/18--Sue Ambrosic
1/25--Gary Collard

SACRISTAN

Contact [Kathryn Myers](#)

Mary Ann Poling

LAY LECTOR

Contact [Karl Kalk](#)

Scott Johnson

USHERS

Contact [Dick Longworth](#)

Jeff Akey
Gary Collard
Richard Evert
Dan Farrar

New Assisted Hearing Devices Available



Four assisted listening devices are available at the sound system table in the back of the sanctuary at the beginning of worship. Please see Jim Johnson or John Stanko if you need assistance with these devices.

You can also use your smartphone to access the system. Go to your app store and download the **WaveCAST** app. Then connect to the sanctuary Wi-Fi:

Network: sound media

Password: Sound127

Once connected to the Wi-Fi, open the WaveCAST app and tap on **St. Paul's** to access the worship service. If you need help, please see Jim or John.

St. Paul's Phone App



- Go to your app store-Download
 - ✓ **My Church by Pushpay**
- Open the app
 - ✓ Search for St Paul's by typing **STPLC APP**
- Click on the St Paul's logo

Choose My Church by Pushpay from the App Store.

To take advantage of all the app's features, you must create an account. Get notifications and reminders of upcoming events, access our live stream worship and worship bulletins, send prayer requests, see the church calendar, and give electronically.

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

We are a community of believers called together to be the Body of Christ for the sake of our families, community and our world. We invite you to join us for worship on Sunday mornings as we celebrate God's redeeming and freeing grace in Jesus Christ our Lord.



The Reverend Mark Kreemer officiating.

Thank you to all who have submitted photos for this newsletter. To see more photos, follow the Facebook pages listed below.



Cathedral Concerts Facebook Page



St. Paul's Facebook Page

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
127 Cherry Rd. NE, Massillon, OH 44646
330 832-7409

Office Hours: T, W, F 9am-1pm



ELCA Vision: A world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation.



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